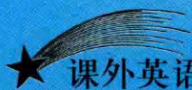


THE MOONSTONE

月亮宝石

流水 晚钟 / 编

百年风雨品评着的经典之作，
优美文字酝酿出的文学之音！



★ 课外英语

名著节选

英文版



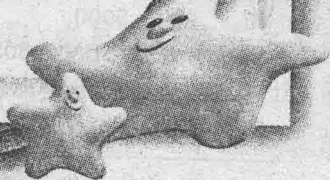
上海译文出版社

◆名著节选◆

THE MOONSTONE
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课外英语
名著节选
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前 言

泰戈尔说：“知识是珍贵宝石的结晶，文化是宝石放出的光泽。”

列夫·托尔斯泰说：“理想的书籍，是智慧的钥匙。”

别林斯基说：“好的书籍是最贵重的珍宝。”

可见，书籍是人类多么亲密的朋友，知识在人类社会中占有多么重要的位置。而人们漫无目的的读书，不但不能获得预期的效果，还可能适得其反，所以我们在读书时，一定要认真地进行筛选。正如歌德所说：“读一本好书，就是和许多高尚的人谈话。”

那么，我们又该选择一些什么类型的书呢？随着社会的发展，青少年对知识的渴求逐渐强烈，特别是对于英语知识的需要更为明显。专家建议说，多读英文名著，是学习英语的一个非常重要的手段，也是提高英语水平的一个有效方法。为此，我们的编者认真进行了筛选，倾情向您推荐这套《名著节选》丛书，希望它对于提高您的英语阅读和写作水平能有所帮助，更希望它能成为您了解西方文化的一个窗口。

本套丛书均选自优秀的世界名著，而且许多作品曾无数次被搬上银幕，并被译成多种语言文字，在世界上享有很高的声誉。为了更适合青少年朋友的阅读和欣赏的需要，我们对这些作品做了相应的节选，愿这些久经锤炼的作品陪您度过难忘的阅读时光。

莎士比亚说：“书籍是全世界的营养品。生活里没有书籍，就好像没有阳光；智慧里没有书籍，就好像鸟儿没有翅膀……”我们更希望这些优秀的文学作品带给您的是知识上的充实和精神上的享受，给您留下永不褪色的回忆！

编者

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CHAPTER III

I HAVE only the most indistinct recollection of what happened at Hotherstone's Farm.

I remember a hearty welcome; a prodigious supper, which would have fed a whole village in the East; a delightfully clean bedroom, with nothing in it to regret but that detestable product of the folly of our forefathers—a feather-bed; a restless night, with much kindling of matches, and many lightings of one little candle; and an immense sensation of relief when the sun rose, and there was a prospect of getting up.

It had been arranged over-night with Betteredge, that I was to call for him, on our way to Cobb's Hole, as early as I liked—which, interpreted by my impatience to get possession of the letter, meant as early as I could. Without waiting for breakfast at the Farm, I took a crust of bread in my hand, and set forth, in some doubt whether I should not surprise the excellent Betteredge in his bed. To my great relief he proved to be quite as excited about the coming event as I was. I found him ready, and waiting for me, with his stick in his hand. "How are you this morning, Betteredge?"

"Very poorly, sir."

“Sorry to hear it. What do you complain of?”

“I complain of a new disease, Mr. Franklin, of my own inventing. I don't want to alarm you, but you're certain to catch it before the morning is out.”

“The devil I am!”

“Do you feel an uncomfortable heat at the pit of your stomach, sir? and a nasty thumping at the top of your head? Ah! not yet? It will lay hold of at Cobb's Hole, Mr. Franklin. I call it the detective fever; and I first caught it in the company of Sergeant Cuff.”

“Aye! aye! and the cure in this instance is to open Rosanna Spearman's letter, I suppose? Come along, and let's get it.”

Early as it was, we found the fisherman's wife astir in her kitchen. On my presentation by Betteredge, good Mrs. Yolland performed a social ceremony, strictly reserved (as I afterwards learnt) for strangers of distinction. She put a bottle of Dutch gin and a couple of clean pipes on the table, and opened the conversation by saying, “What news from London, sir?”

Before I could find an answer to this immensely comprehensive question, an apparition advanced towards me, out of a dark corner of the kitchen. A wan, wild, haggard girl, with remarkably beautiful hair, and with a fierce keenness in her eyes, came limping up on a crutch to the table at which I was sitting, and looked at me as if I was an object of mingled interest and horror, which it quite fascinated her to see.

“Mr. Betteredge,” she said, without taking her eyes off me, “mention his name again, if you please.”

“This gentleman's name,” answered Betteredge (with a strong

emphasis on gentleman), "is Mr. Franklin Blake."

The girl turned her back on me, and suddenly left the room. Good Mrs. Yolland—as I believe—made some apologies for her daughter's odd behaviour, and Betteredge (probably) translated them into polite English. I speak of this in complete uncertainty. My attention was absorbed in following the sound of the girl's crutch. Thump-thump, up the wooden stairs; thump-thump across the room above our heads; thump-thump down the stairs again—and there stood the apparition at the open door, with a letter in its hand, beckoning me out! I left more apologies in course of delivery behind, me, and followed this strange creature—limping on before me, faster and faster—down the slope of the beach. She led me behind some boats, out of sight and hearing of the few people in the fishing-village, and then stopped, and faced me for the first time.

"Stand there," she said, "I want to look at you."

There was no mistaking the expression on her face. I inspired her with the strongest emotions of abhorrence and disgust. Let me not be vain enough to say that no woman had ever looked at me in this manner before. I will only venture on the more modest assertion that no woman had ever let me perceive it yet. There is a limit to the length of the inspection which a man can endure, under certain circumstances. I attempted to direct Limping Lucy's attention to some less revolting object than my face.

"I think you have got a letter to give me," I began. "Is it the letter there, in your hand?"

"Say that again," was the only answer I received.

I repeated the words, like a good child learning its lesson.

"No," said the girl, speaking to herself, but keeping her eyes still mercilessly fixed on me. "I can't find out what she saw in his face. I can't guess what she heard in his voice." She suddenly looked away from me, and rested her head wearily on the top of her crutch. "Oh, my poor dear!" she said, in the first soft tones which had fallen from her, in my hearing. "Oh, my lost darling! what could you see in this man?" She lifted her head again fiercely, and looked at me once more. "Can you eat and drink?" she asked.

I did my best to preserve my gravity, and answered, "Yes."

"Can you sleep?"

"Yes."

"When you see a poor girl in service, do you feel no remorse?"

"Certainly not. Why should I?"

She abruptly thrust the letter (as the phrase is) into my face.

"Take it!" she exclaimed furiously. "I never set eyes on you before. God Almighty forbid I should ever set eyes on you again."

With those parting words she limped away from me at the top of her speed. The one interpretation that I could put on her conduct has, no doubt, been anticipated by everybody. I could only suppose that she was mad.

Having reached that inevitable conclusion, I turned to the more interesting object of investigation which was presented to me by Rosanna Spearman's letter. The address was written as follows:— "For Franklin Blake, Esq. To be given into his own hands (and not to be trusted to anyone else), by Lucy Yolland."

I broke the seal. The envelope contained a letter; and this, in its turn, contained a slip of paper. I read the letter first:—

"SIR,— If you are curious to know the meaning of my behaviour to you, whilst you were staying in the house of my mistress, Lady Verinder, do what you are told to do in the memorandum enclosed with this— and do it without any person being present to overlook you. Your humble servant,

"ROSANNA SPEARMAN."

I turned to the slip of paper next. Here is the literal copy of it, word for word:

"Memorandum:— To go to the Shivering Sand at the turn of the tide. To walk out on the South Spit, until I get the South Spit. Beacon, and the flagstaff at the Coast-guard station above Cobb's Hole in a line together. To lay down on the rocks, a stick, or any straight thing to guide my hand, exactly in the line of the beacon and the flagstaff. To take care, in doing this, that one end of the stick shall be at the edge of the rocks, on the side of them which overlooks the quicksand. To feel along the stick, among the seaweed (beginning from the end of the stick which points towards the beacon), for the Chain. To run my hand along the Chain, when found, until I come to the part of it which stretches over the edge of the rocks, down into the quicksand. And then, to pull the chain."

Just as I had read the last words— underlined in the original— I heard the voice of Betteredge behind me. The inventor of the detective fever had completely succumbed to that irresistible malady. "I

can't stand it any longer, Mr. Franklin. What does her letter say? For mercy's sake, sir, tell us, what does her letter say?"

I handed him the letter, and the memorandum. He read the first without appearing to be much interested in it. But the second—the memorandum—produced a strong impression on him.

"The Sergeant said it!" cried Betteredge. "From first to last, sir, the Sergeant said she had got a memorandum of the hiding-place. And here it is! Lord save us, Mr. Franklin, here is the secret that puzzled everybody, from the great Cuff downwards, ready and waiting, as one may say, to show itself to you! It's the ebb now, sir, as anybody may see for themselves. How long will it be till the turn of the tide?" He looked up, and observed a lad at work, at some little distance from us, mending a net. "Tammie Bright!" he shouted at the top of his voice.

"I hear you!" Tammie shouted back.

"When's the turn of the tide?"

"In an hour's time."

We both looked at our watches.

"We can go round by the coast, Mr. Franklin," said Betteredge; "and get to the quicksand in that way, with plenty of time to spare. What do you say, sir?"

"Come along."

On our way to the Shivering Sand, I applied to Betteredge to revive my memory of events (as affecting Rosanna Spearman) at the period of Sergeant Cuff's inquiry. With my old friend's help, I soon had the succession of circumstances clearly registered in my mind. Rosanna's journey to Frizinghall, when the whole house-hold believed

her to be ill in her own room— Rosanna's mysterious employment of the night-time, with her door locked, and her candle burning till the morning— Rosanna's suspicious purchase of the japanned tin case, and the two dog's chains from Mrs. Yolland— the Sergeant's positive conviction that Rosanna had hidden something at the Shivering Sand, and the Sergeant's absolute ignorance as to what that something might be— all these strange results of the abortive inquiry into the loss of the Moonstone were clearly present to me again, when we reached the quicksand, and walked out together on the low ledge of rocks called the South Spit.

With Betteredge's help, I soon stood in the right position to see the Beacon and the Coast-guard flagstaff in a line together. Following the memorandum as our guide, we next laid my stick in the necessary direction, as neatly as we could, on the uneven surface of the rocks. And then we looked at our watches once more.

It wanted nearly twenty minutes yet of the turn of the tide. I suggested waiting through this interval on the beach, instead of on the wet and slippery surface of the rocks. Having reached the dry sand, I prepared to sit down; and, greatly to my surprise, Betteredge prepared to leave me.

“What are you going away for?” I asked.

“Look at the letter again, sir, and you will see.”

A glance at the letter reminded me that I was charged, when I made my discovery, to make it alone.

“It's hard enough for me to leave you, at such a time as this,” said Betteredge. “But she died a dreadful death, poor soul— and I feel a kind of call on me, Mr. Franklin, to humour that fancy of hers. Be-

sides," he added confidentially, "there's nothing in the letter against your letting out the secret afterwards. I'll hang about in the fir plantation, and wait till you pick me up. Don't be longer than you can help, sir. The detective fever isn't an easy disease to deal with, under these circumstances."

With that parting caution, he left me.

The interval of expectation, short as it was when reckoned by the measure of time, assumed formidable proportions when reckoned by the measure of suspense. This was one of the occasions on which the invaluable habit of smoking becomes especially precious and consolatory. I lit a cigar, and sat down on the slope of the beach.

The sunlight poured its unclouded beauty on every object that I could see. The exquisite freshness of the air made the mere act of living and breathing a luxury. Even the lonely little bay welcomed the morning with a show of cheerfulness; and the bared wet surface of the quicksand itself, glittering with a golden brightness, hid the horror of its false brown face under a passing smile. It was the finest day I had seen since my return to England.

The turn of the tide came, before my cigar was finished. I saw the preliminary heaving of the Sand, and then the awful shiver that crept over its surface— as if some spirit of terror lived and moved and shuddered in the fathomless deeps beneath. I threw away my cigar, and went back again to the rocks.

My directions in the memorandum instructed me to feel along the line traced by the stick, beginning with the end which was nearest to the beacon.

I advanced, in this manner, more than half-way along the stick,

without encountering anything but the edges of the rocks. An inch or two farther on, however, my patience was rewarded. In a narrow little fissure, just within reach of my forefinger, I felt the chain. Attempting, next, to follow it, by touch, in the direction of the quicksand, I found my progress stopped by a thick growth of seaweed—which had fastened itself into the fissure, no doubt, in the time that had elapsed since Rosanna Spearman had chosen her hiding-place.

It was equally impossible to pull up the seaweed, or to force my hand through it. After marking the spot indicated by the end of the stick which was placed nearest to the quicksand, I determined to pursue the search for the chain on a plan of my own. My idea was to “sound” immediately under the rocks, on the chance of recovering the lost trace of the chain at the point at which it entered the sand. I took up the stick, and knelt down on the brink of the South Spit.

In this position, my face was within a few feet of the surface of the quicksand. The sight of it so near me, still disturbed at intervals by its hideous shivering fit, shook my nerves for the moment. A horrible fancy that the dead woman might appear on the scene of her suicide, to assist my search—an unutterable dread of seeing her rise through the heaving surface of the sand, and point to the place—forced itself into my mind, and turned me cold in the warm sunlight. I own I closed my eyes at the moment when the point of the stick first entered the quicksand.

The instant afterwards, before the stick could have been submerged more than a few inches, I was free from the hold of my own superstitious terror, and was throbbing with excitement from head to foot. Sounding blindfold, at my first attempt—at that first attempt I

had sounded right! The stick struck the chain. Taking a firm hold of the roots of the seaweed with my left hand, I laid myself down over the brink, and felt with my right hand under the overhanging edges of the rock. My right hand found the chain.

I drew it up without the slightest difficulty. And there was the japanned tin case fastened to the end of it.

The action of the water had so rusted the chain, that it was impossible for me to unfasten it from the hasp which attached it to the case. Putting the case between my knees and exerting my utmost strength, I contrived to draw off the cover. Some white substance filled the whole interior when I looked in. I put in my hand, and found it to be linen.

In drawing out the linen, I also drew out a letter crumpled up with it. After looking at the direction, and discovering that it bore my name, I put the letter in my pocket, and completely removed the linen. It came out in a thick roll, moulded, of course, to the shape of the case in which it had been so long confined, and perfectly preserved from any injury by the sea.

I carried the linen to the dry sand of the beach, and there unrolled and smoothed it out. There was no mistaking it as an article of dress. It was a nightgown.

The uppermost side, when I spread it out, presented to view innumerable folds and creases, and nothing more. I tried the undermost side, next—and instantly discovered the smear of the paint from the door of Rachel's boudoir! My eyes remained riveted on the stain, and my mind took me back at a leap from present to past. The very words of Sergeant Cuff recurred to me, as if the man himself was at my side

again, pointing to the unanswerable inference which he drew from the smear on the door.

“Find out whether there is any article of dress in this house with the stain of paint on it. Find out who that dress belongs to. Find out how the person can account for having been in the room, and smeared the paint, between midnight and three in the morning. If the person can't satisfy you, you haven't far to look for the hand that took the Diamond.”

One after another those words travelled over my memory, repeating themselves again and again with a wearisome, mechanical reiteration. I was roused from what felt like a trance of many hours— from what was really, no doubt, the pause of a few moments only— by a voice calling to me. I looked up, and saw that Betteredge's patience had failed him at last. He was just visible between the sandhills, returning to the beach.

The old man's appearance recalled me, the moment I perceived it, to my sense of present things, and reminded me that the inquiry which I had pursued thus far still remained incomplete. I had discovered the smear on the nightgown. To whom did the nightgown belong?

My first impulse was to consult the letter in my pocket— the letter which I had found in the case.

As I raised my hand to take it out, I remembered that there was a shorter way to discovery than this. The nightgown itself would reveal the truth; for, in all probability, the nightgown was marked with its owner's name.